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NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS

A MESSAGE FROM THE NURSES' ASSOCIATION OF CHINA TO THE PROFESSION AT HOME

This is a statement of the present condition of the nursing profession in China from a number of nurses who have spent a good many years trying to better these conditions, to the nurses at home, in the hope and almost the belief, that when the case is placed before them, there may be some to whom it will appeal to help establish this profession in this great country on a firm basis, so that in years to come, the people of China may look upon ours as an honored profession and one for which many hundreds of thousands have cause to be grateful.

The day of pioneer work is over. We can only wonder at the people possessed of the conviction that must have been necessary to attempt it. They offered their skill in the service of China; they were placed in positions where good work from our standpoint was out of the question, partly on account of the prejudice and distrust of the people with whom they had to deal, and partly because of the lack of professional help and the stimulus it brings. Some of them grew to consider numbers of patients as all important. The Chinese knew nothing of the quality of work, and the stimulus of professional criterion being lacking, these early doctors and nurses must have reasoned that what they brought to the Chinese was far better than anything they had had previously. These men and women "lost out" professionally, but they inserted the opening wedge. We are, as it were, the next generation, the next link in the chain, and we are demanding of ourselves, of each other, and are having demanded of us by the Chinese, far different things.

There are among us those who were allowed their full two years for the study of the Chinese language, who have continued that study, and who are fulfilling our duty as teachers of theory and of practice, but these few are limited indeed. The far greater number of us were, by lack of foresight in their superiors and the urgency of the work, thrown into hospital work with one year, or even less, of study. The result is that most of us will never be able to do our full duty as instructors, we cannot take the time to study, and if we did, we are past the age when we can readily acquire language. We are back numbers, too lacking in preparation as teachers to be able to teach except in the most elementary way in the subjects necessary to the profession. But we see clearly the time has come when it must be done, so that an injustice may not be done to the men and women we are training, to our profession, and to the nation.

Some of us hope to work here many years, while some know at best it can only be a few. We can supervise hospitals, operating rooms, and clinics, the kitchens and laundries, we can teach by demonstration, but we cannot, *with* these responsibilities, prepare ourselves to teach in a way that will enable us to continue to draw the educated men and women, to whom the profession has a right, into our training schools; but we can hold the ground while new nurses acquire the language and make the advance. Each year our students are better educated; each year we demand a little more and get it.

The Nurses' Association of China is in itself a proof of progress. The Association is national. For membership, a diploma of a large general hospital, where the training is not less than two years, is requisite. Yearly examinations have been established. The hospitals containing a certain number of beds and whose course of training meets the requirements of the Association are registered; some of the best of these are now making the diploma of their training school dependent on the ability of the pupil to pass the Association's examinations, both practical and theoretical. Surely there are among your ranks those to whom the difficult things appeal. This is not a small matter. We need, above all else, teachers of theory (we need practical teachers and workers as well), we want well educated young women, graduates of great general hospitals, with an additional training of a year or two of institutional work, who feel that in teaching alone lies the root of the profession; who see in this a great opportunity. It means two years' study in the language and after that two years in which hard preparation will be necessary for each class; after that it will be easier.

The Chinese are bright and capable, worth the teaching; and in five years you will see the result of your work.

We are training women nurses for women's hospitals, men for men's hospitals, and we draw from the educated class. In time it may be that Chinese women nurses will work in men's hospitals, probably in twenty years, that is, if not tried too soon by those who do not understand the prejudices of the Chinese, and the very solid reason back of these prejudices. If the experiment is tried before the time is ripe, it will mean the entire loss to the profession, for years to come, of the daughters of educated families, and the same struggles through which the profession rose at home. Only to those who know in detail these struggles (not yet at an end) can the situation in China appeal in its fullest significance.

Would it not interest some of you to help us keep the foothold we have already gained?

Great plans are being made by the Rockefeller Commission for the

efficient training of Chinese men physicians. The two professions must go forward together, if they are to go at all. The Commission has already begun the work of training medical students. Can we not keep abreast of them? Now is the crucial time.

It has been said that the reason we have not a greater number of volunteers is because nurses as a body do not know of the need. Is this true? If it is, let the various mission boards hear from any one who thinks it worth while to help turn the tide in an unequal battle and place the profession firmly on its feet in a country where it is new.

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Three hundred million Red-Cross Christmas seals are being printed in Cincinnati for the annual holiday campaign to be conducted under the joint auspices of the American Red Cross and The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis.

The campaign for the sale of Red Cross seals this year will be larger than ever before. Although in 1915 the sale reached the record total of 80,000,000 seals, bringing in \$800,000, it is expected that this year at least 100,000,000 seals or \$1,000,000 worth will be sold. The sale will be organized from Alaska to the Canal Zone and from Hawaii to Porto Rico. Every state and territory in the United States will have seals on sale. New organizations will be working in a number of the western states, including Montana, Utah and Wyoming. Distribution of the seals is now under way.